

As a Video Relay Service Interpreter for more than three years I have been witness to the phenomenal popularity and growth of this industry. I have witnessed the tremendous impact this new technology has had on the lives of consumers, Interpreters as individuals, and the Interpreting profession as a whole. As a professional providing VRS interpreting, I have been involved in national and local discussions on how VRS has and continues to effect change. As a student, I have taken a college course and workshops on Video Relay Service that required research and thought provoking discussion on all aspects of this service.

I would like to petition the FCC to set the reimbursement rate for VRS at 6.7738 and set that rate for three years. My rationales for making this request are as follows:

1. Sign Language Interpreting is a demanding and difficult job in almost all settings. Interpreting Video Relay Service adds levels of complexity and difficulty in terms of the physical, mental, and often emotional, demands of this profession. Members of the Interpreting profession are seriously concerned about burnout among VRS Interpreters, and it is imperative that the VRS providers continue to have the financial resources necessary to implement solutions to this problem that will only get worse with time if not dealt with effectively.
2. There have already been many improvements and changes made to equipment, software, policies, and procedures. As the technology improves, consumers demand and/or ask for more changes, and as our knowledge and experience grow there will be more changes made in the future. These changes require training for the interpreters who must be paid for their time during training.
3. Since the successful lobbying of the FCC to implement the speed of answer requirements, the providers must assure that there are enough Interpreters scheduled at all times. The providers need the resources to continue to recruit, train (with pay), and retain qualified Interpreters to meet the ever decreasing time allowed under the speed of answer requirement, and the growing demand for VRS equipment and service.

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Video Relay Service Interpreter